

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

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Testimony of Alyson Baker

Appropriations Committee

RE: H.B. No. 6350 AN ACT CONCERNING THE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM
ENDING JUNE 30, 2015, AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO REVENUE

Chairwoman Harp, Chairwoman Walker, members of the committee,

My name is Alyson Baker, executive director of The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield. I am here today to testify on H.B. No. 6350 AN ACT CONCERNING THE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2015, AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO REVENUE.

I am proud to advocate for the Committee's support for an exciting partnership of the seven leading independent, accredited art museums in the state of Connecticut. An irreplaceable economic and educational resource, they represent a significant attraction for tourists and help to define the national and international identity of Connecticut.

The direct state funding that we are requesting is crucial to the long-term viability of our institutions, as well as to our ability to meet the demands of growing audiences and the expanded roles of our museums within our communities.

Currently, our only potential source for annual state funding is through the *Creative Placemaking* competitive grant process. This funding stream offers a crucial support structure for the arts in the state; however, it is not calibrated to the needs of senior institutions like ours. With a combined 744 years of service, there is absolutely no question that our museums have extremely effective management structures; are able to provide much-needed, high-quality programs for students and constituents of all ages; are exceptional stewards of the state's history and artistic holdings; and have the ability to assess and adapt to the changing needs of our respective communities.

The current funding structure addresses the needs of entrepreneurial organizations that benefit from changing, project-based grants. Our well-established, high-functioning museums need long-term, consistent state funding to allow us to efficiently plan internationally acclaimed exhibitions, valuable education programs, and diverse targeted marketing initiatives.

We believe that the museums whose representatives appear before you today are an essential element of the fabric of life in Connecticut. Your support is vital to our ability to successfully preserve our history, and to present our exhibitions and collections, while enhancing our outreach, educational initiatives, and ongoing development of relevant and meaningful programs.

An investment in these museums signifies an investment in the cultural life of Connecticut, the education of our children, and the advancement of our economy.

Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to speak with you today on this important issue. I ask that you support H.B. No. 6350.

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